SONIC™
-MEGA DRIVE-
#1
THE NEXT LEVEL
Archie ACTION!
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SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

CHARACTER SELECT

SONIC
– THE HEDGEHOG –
PERFECT BALANCE OF ATTITUDE AND SPEED

TAILS
MILES "TAILS" PROWER
HIGH-FLYING BUDDING HERO

AMY
– AMY ROSE –
ALWAYS HAPPY TO HELP

KNUCKLES
– THE ECHIDNA –
ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE BRUISER

DR. EGGMAN
WORLD-CONQUEROR

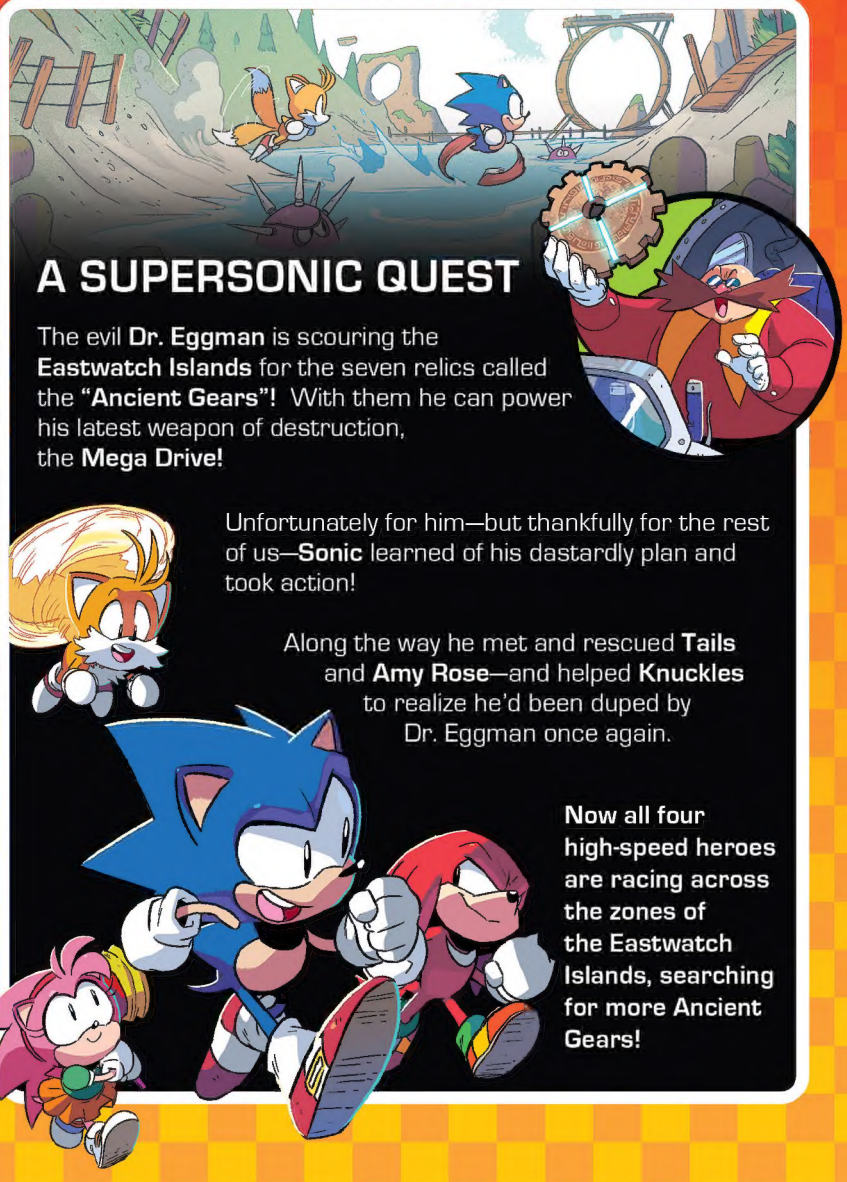
Welcome to the Sonic Comic Universe — a world unique & beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Where Sonic and his friends travel new lands as they battle the evil ambitions of Dr. Eggman!

SONIC™

-MEGA DRIVE-

THE NEXT LEVEL

THE STORY SO FAR...


A SUPERSONIC QUEST
The evil **Dr. Eggman** is scouring the **Eastwatch Islands** for the seven relics called the **"Ancient Gears"!** With them he can power his latest weapon of destruction, the **Mega Drive!**
Unfortunately for him—but thankfully for the rest of us—**Sonic** learned of his dastardly plan and took action!
Along the way he met and rescued **Tails** and **Amy Rose**—and helped **Knuckles** to realize he'd been duped by Dr. Eggman once again.
Now all four high-speed heroes are racing across the zones of the Eastwatch Islands, searching for more Ancient Gears!

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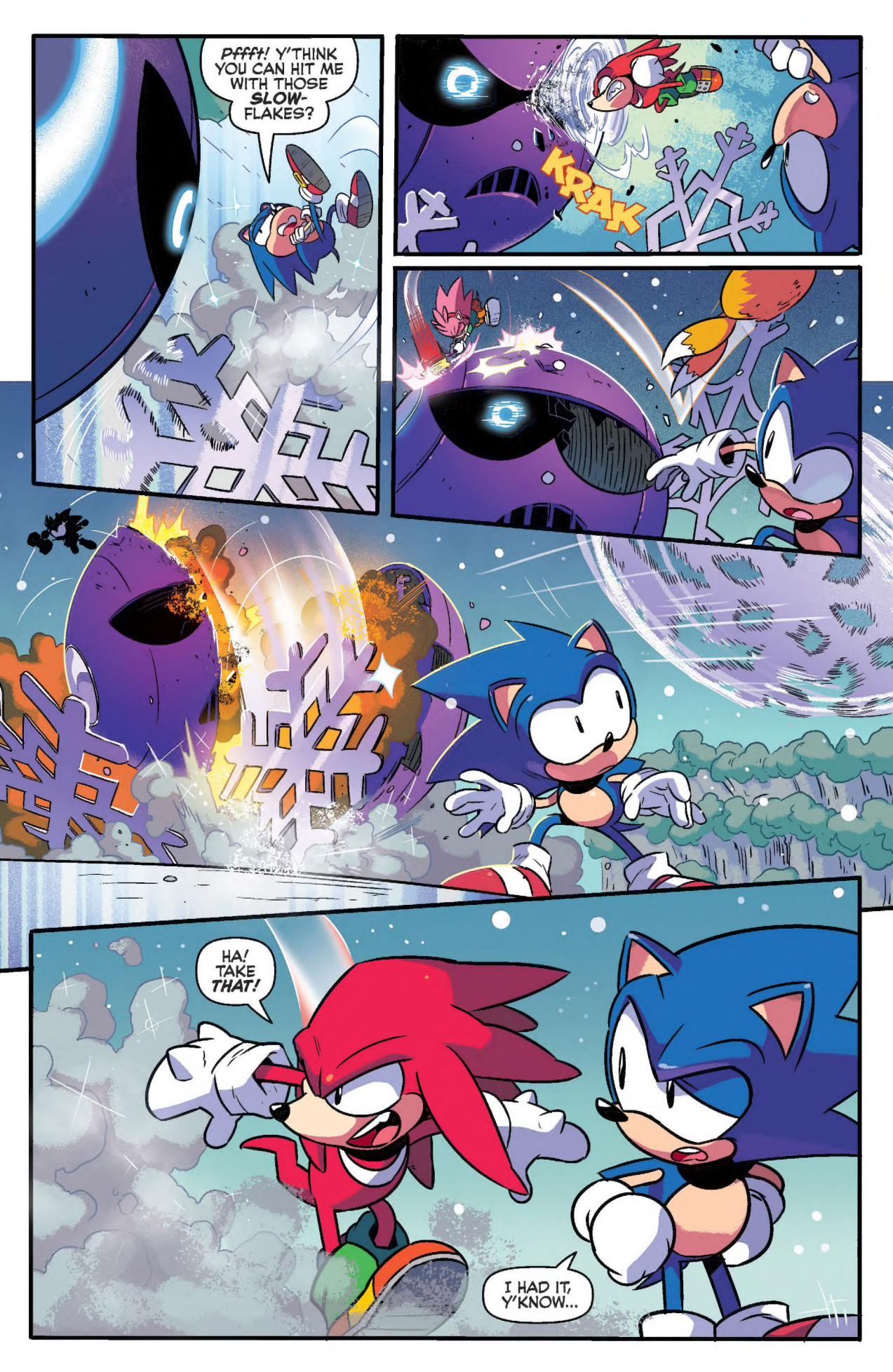
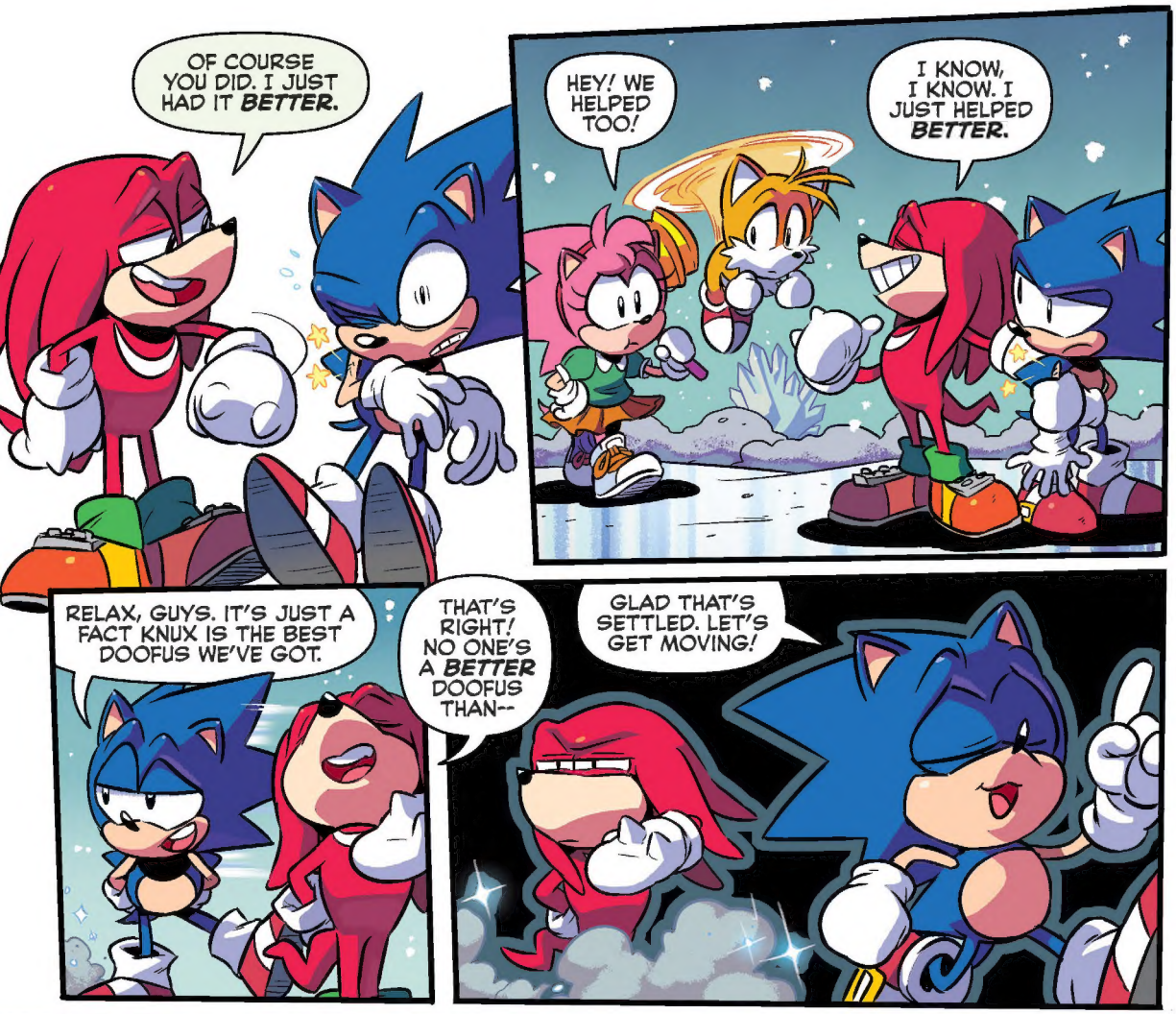

Pffft! Y'THINK YOU CAN HIT ME WITH THOSE SLOW-FLAKES?
KRAK
HA! TAKE THAT!
I HAD IT, Y'KNOW...

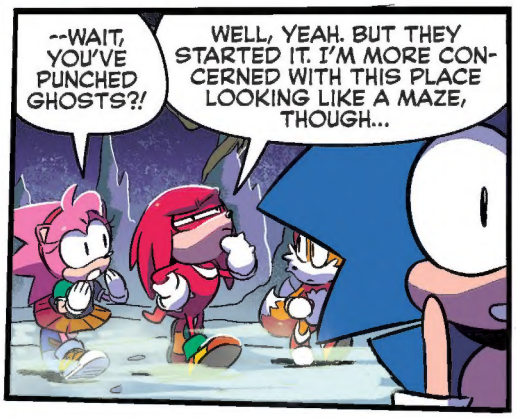

OF COURSE YOU DID. I JUST HAD IT BETTER.
HEY! WE HELPED TOO!
I KNOW, I KNOW. I JUST HELPED BETTER.
RELAX, GUYS. IT'S JUST A FACT KNUX IS THE BEST DOOFUS WE'VE GOT.
THAT'S RIGHT! NO ONE'S A BETTER DOOFUS THAN--
GLAD THAT'S SETTLED. LET'S GET MOVING!

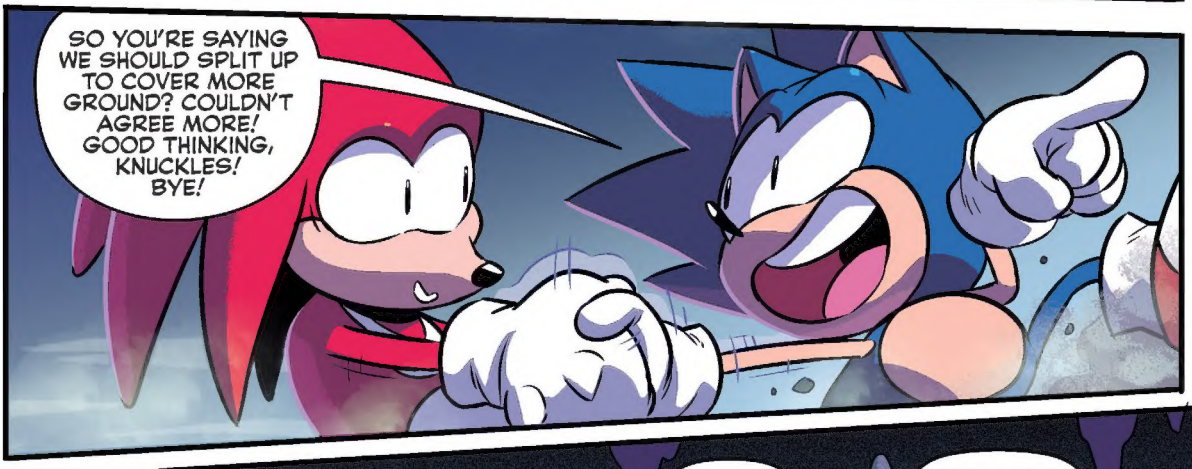
HA! CAUGHT UP TO YOU AGAIN, EGGMAN!
"CAUGHT UP"? OH-HO-HO! I'VE BEEN WAITING TO ASK YOU A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION!
♫ DO YOU WANNA FIGHT A SNOWMAN?!
WHUD
THAT BOSS ROBOT'S PRETTY SNOW-BALLER, BUT--!
EVERYBODY! ATTACK THE BOTTOM SNOWBALL!

Um...
FRUMP
NOOOOOO!!
SPROING
BRAK
Oh, THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL...

HAUNTED DEPTHS ZONE
T-TAILS? A-ARE YOU SURE WE'LL FIND THE NEXT ANCIENT GEAR HERE?
IT'S THE NEXT CLOSEST ISLAND, SO IT'S WORTH A SHOT!

B-BUT WHAT IF THERE ARE GHOSTS?
Pah! THEY DON'T GET UPPITY UNLESS THERE'S NO LIGHT. AND EVEN THEN, YOU JUST PUNCH THEM IN THE FACE!
REALLY? WELL THEN--


--WAIT, YOU'VE PUNCHED GHOSTS?!
WELL, YEAH. BUT THEY STARTED IT. I'M MORE CONCERNED WITH THIS PLACE LOOKING LIKE A MAZE, THOUGH...


SO YOU'RE SAYING WE SHOULD SPLIT UP TO COVER MORE GROUND? COULDN'T AGREE MORE! GOOD THINKING, KNUCKLES! BYE!

...WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
SONIC! NO!
WE OUGHT TO STICK TOGETHER!

THIS IS MORE LIKE IT! JUST ME...
...TAKING IT AT MY OWN PACE...
BESIDES, THE THREE OF THEM CAN HANDLE THEMSELVES.
...AND NOT HAVING TO SHARE THE GLORY!

AAAAAAHHH!!
IT'S FLYING! YOU CAN FLY! GO ATTACK IT!
O-OKAY...
AHHH! BAD PLAN! BAD PLAN!
FINE! I'LL DO IT MYSELF!
ZOT

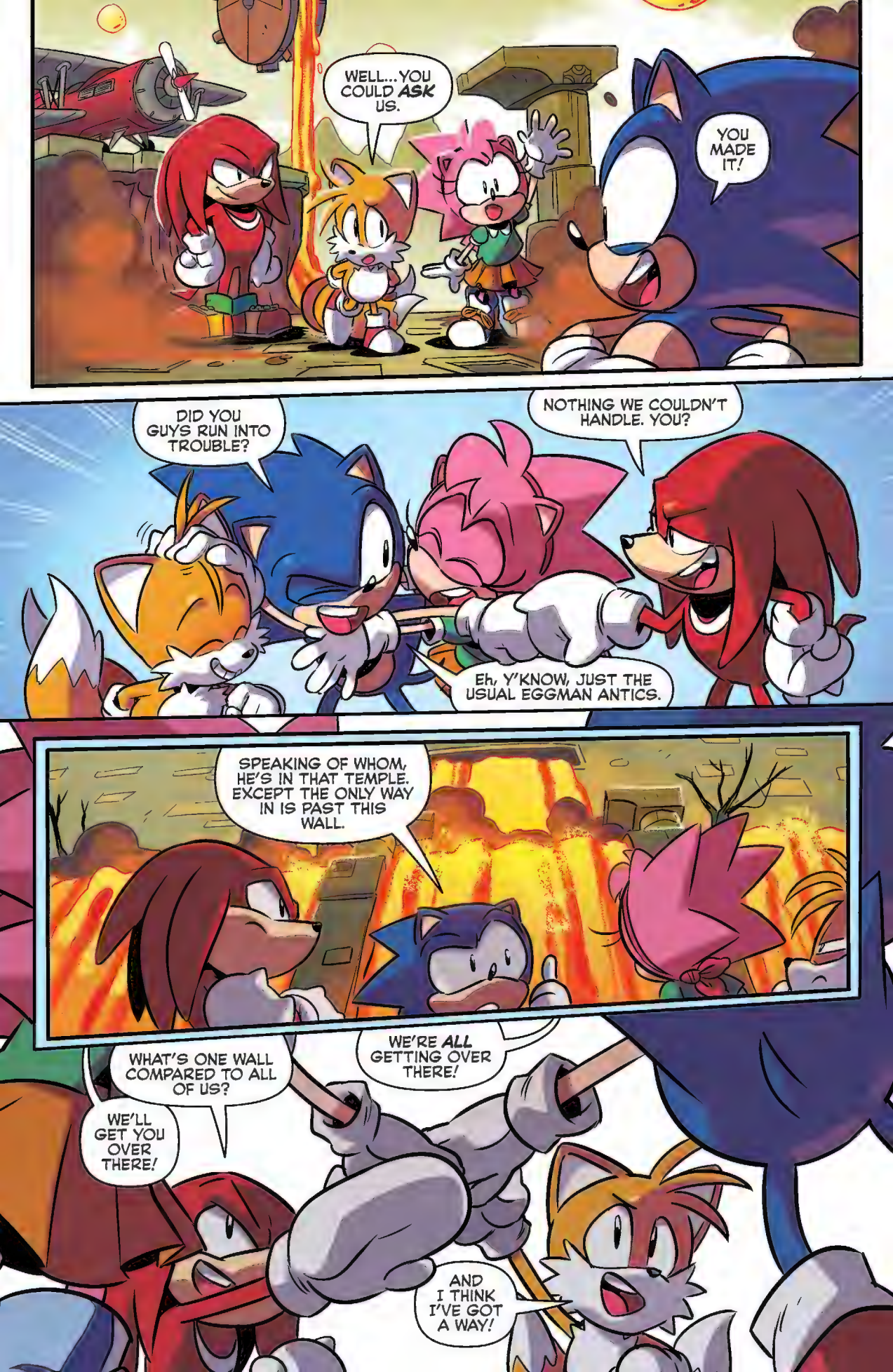
YOU CAN'T HIT IT WHILE IT'S CHARGED UP!
FRLBGRBLE...
I...I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA...
GOTTA TIME THIS JUST RIGHT--!
...BUT YOU NEED TO KEEP IT DISTRACTED!
AHH! MAKE IT QUICK, OKAY?
PIKO
FIZZZT

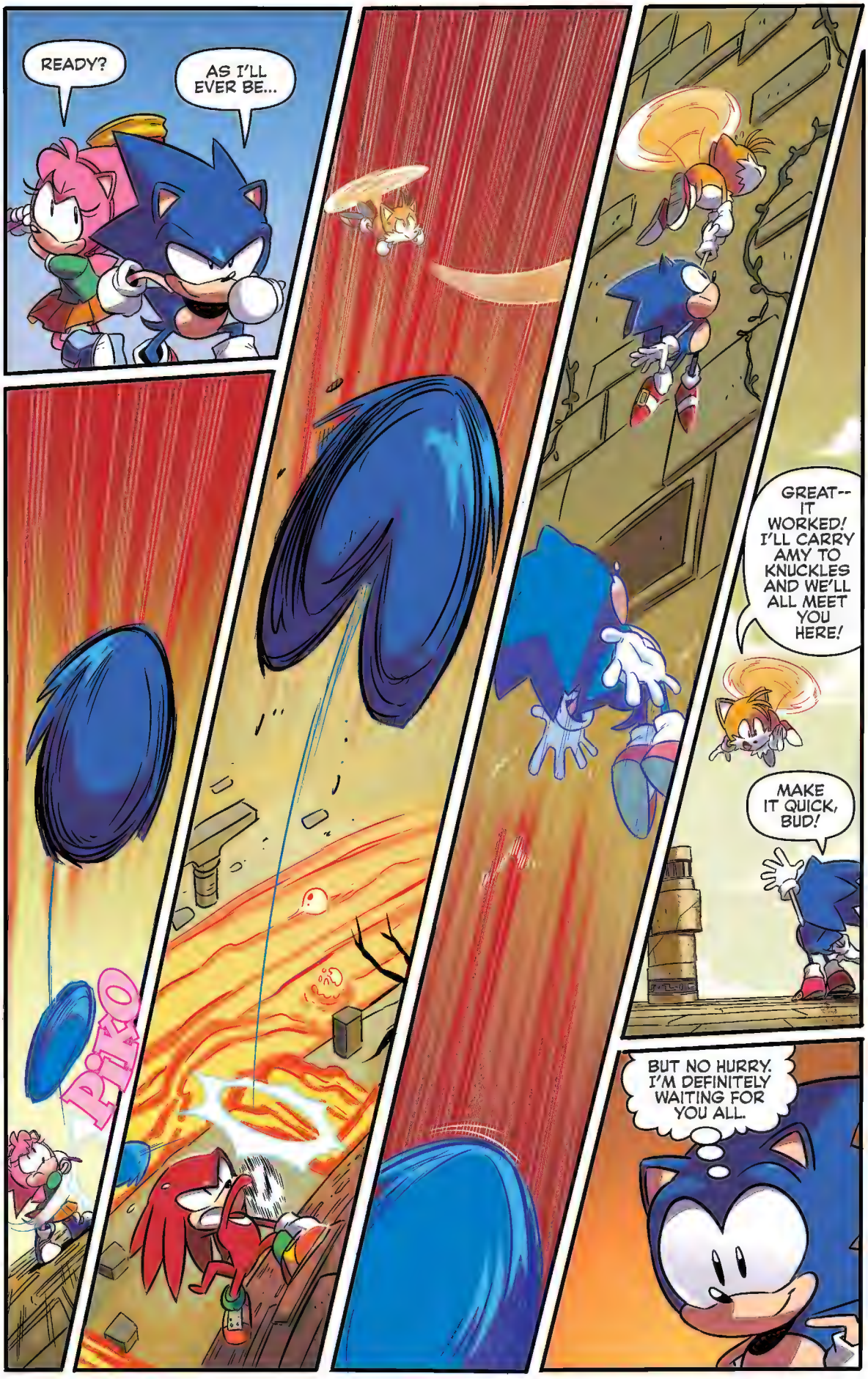
SKA-BOOM
YAY, AMY!
NICE WORK, KID!
Aww! THANKS!
THAT DIDN'T FEEL LIKE A NATURAL TREMOR.
I SURE HOPE SONIC'S OKAY...
RRUMMBLE
RUMMBLE

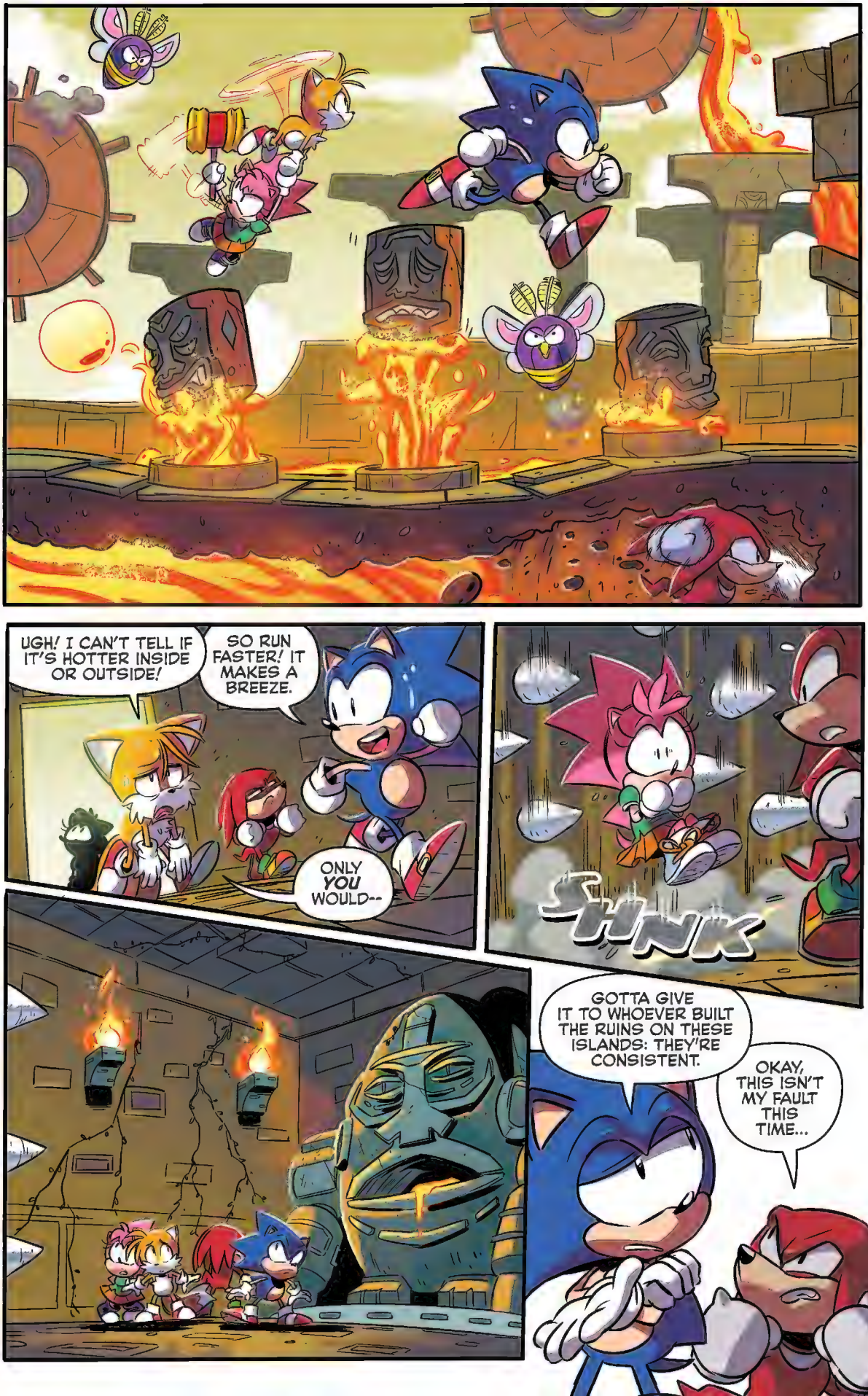
WAH-HA-HA-HA-HA! I HOPE YOU DON'T GET TOO BORED BY MY LATEST CREATION! Oh, WAIT-- YES I DO! EEE-HEE-HEE-HEE!
KRUNCH
...Oh, PHOOEY...
HOW DOES THIS KEEP HAPPENING?!
THAT WAS HILARIOUS! DID YOU GUYS SEE--?

...Oh, YEAH...
WELL... IT'S WHAT I WANTED, RIGHT?
BESIDES, I'M SURE THEY'LL CATCH UP SOON ENOUGH!
TREMORS STOPPED. I HOPE SONIC WASN'T CAUGHT IN A CAVE-IN.
A CAVE-IN?! WHAT IF HE'S TRAPPED?! OR HURT?! OR WORSE?!
DON'T WORRY, GUYS! THIS IS SONIC WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! HE'S UNSTOPPABLE!
D-DO YOU THINK HE'S OKAY?
I'M SURE OF IT!
AND HE CERTAINLY WOULDN'T WANT US STANDING AROUND WORRYING ABOUT HIM. C'MON! LET'S HEAD TO THE NEXT ISLAND!
YEAH! MAYBE WE'LL EVEN GET THERE BEFORE HIM!

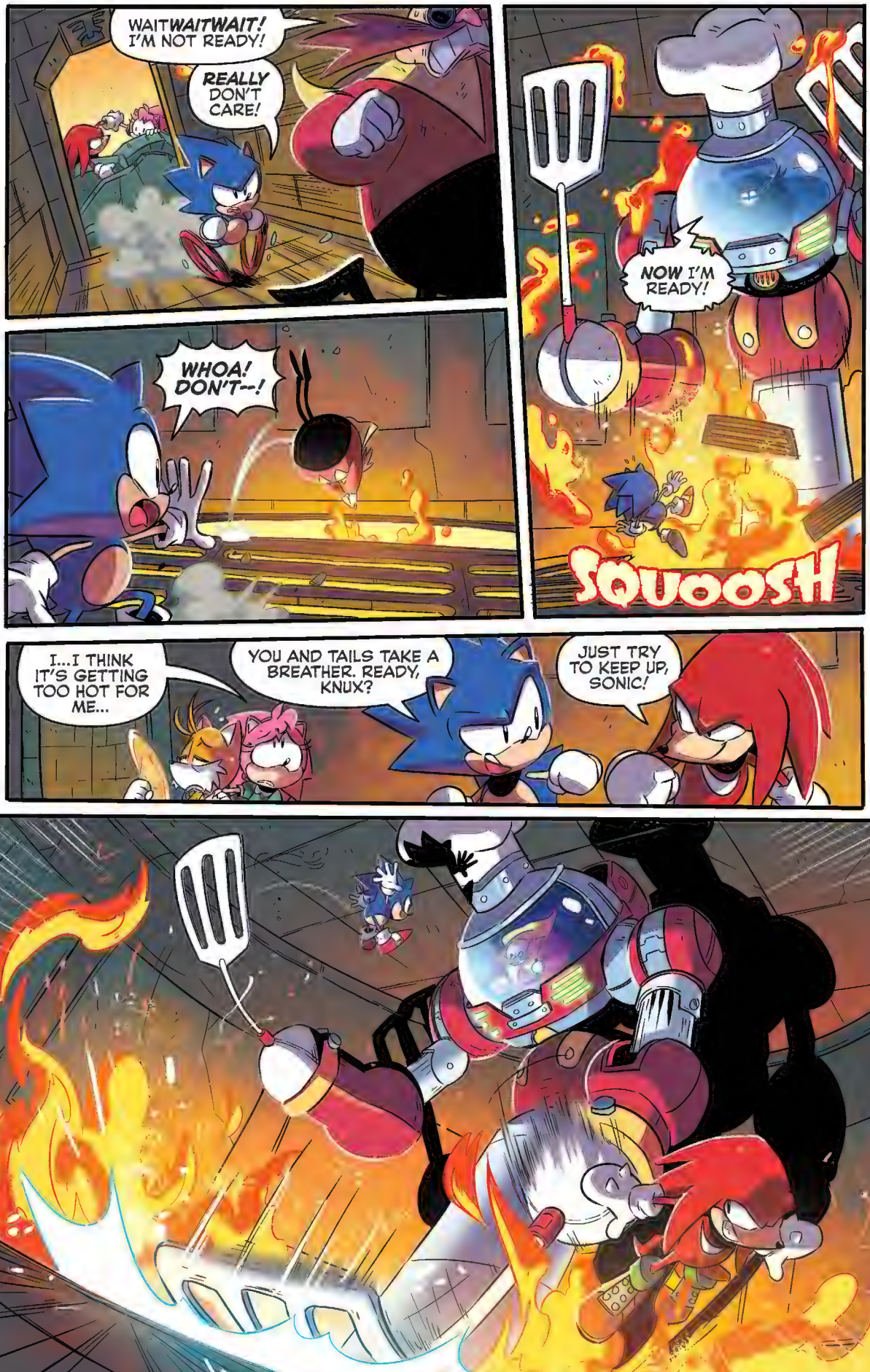
ERUPTION RUIN ZONE
WELL, THIS LOOKS... COZY...
WHOOPS! NO WAY I'M DIVING IN THERE.
AND I DON'T *QUITE* HAVE THE UPS FOR THAT LEDGE. I OUGHT TO TAKE SOME PARKOUR LESSONS AT SOME POINT...
I HATE TO ADMIT IT BUT... I'M STUCK. AND I'VE GOT NO WAY OF KNOWING IF EVERYONE IS ALL RIGHT...


WELL... YOU COULD ASK US.
YOU MADE IT!
DID YOU GUYS RUN INTO TROUBLE?
NOTHING WE COULDN'T HANDLE. YOU?
Eh, Y'KNOW, JUST THE USUAL EGGMAN ANTICS.
SPEAKING OF WHOM, HE'S IN THAT TEMPLE. EXCEPT THE ONLY WAY IN IS PAST THIS WALL.
WHAT'S ONE WALL COMPARED TO ALL OF US?
WE'RE ALL GETTING OVER THERE!
WE'LL GET YOU OVER THERE!
AND I THINK I'VE GOT A WAY!


READY?
AS I'LL EVER BE...
PIKO
GREAT-- IT WORKED! I'LL CARRY AMY TO KNUCKLES AND WE'LL ALL MEET YOU HERE!
MAKE IT QUICK, BUD!
BUT NO HURRY. I'M DEFINITELY WAITING FOR YOU ALL.


UGH! I CAN'T TELL IF IT'S HOTTER INSIDE OR OUTSIDE!
SO RUN FASTER! IT MAKES A BREEZE.
ONLY YOU WOULD--
SHNK
GOTTA GIVE IT TO WHOEVER BUILT THE RUINS ON THESE ISLANDS: THEY'RE CONSISTENT.
OKAY, THIS ISN'T MY FAULT THIS TIME...

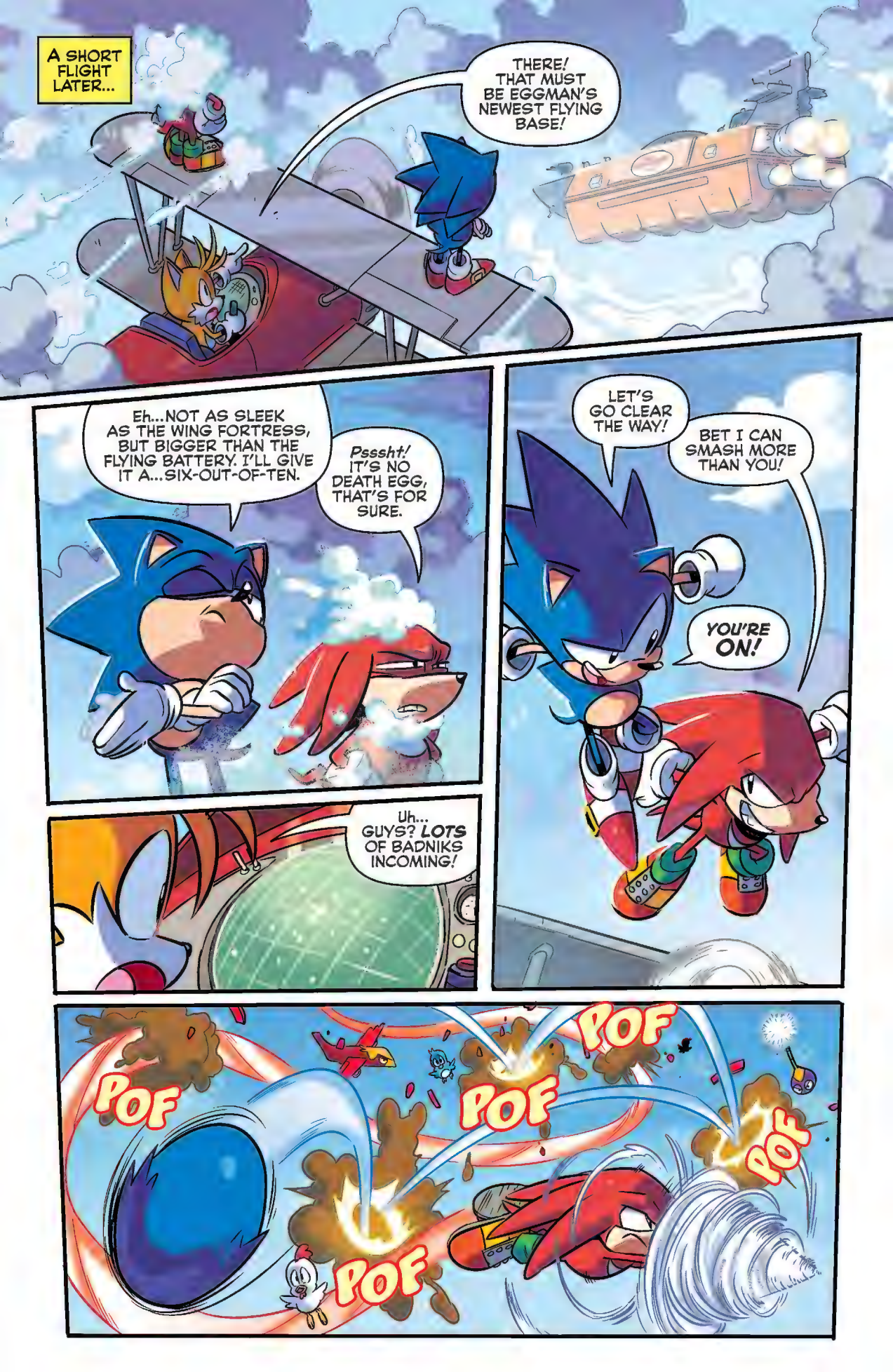
FWOOSH
NO SWEAT, GUYS! JUST HIT THE FACE!
YOU CAN MEASURE THE TEMPERATURE IN KELVIN RIGHT NOW!
OKAY, MAYBE A LITTLE SWEAT...
BRAK
BRAK
PIKO
BRAK
...IN MY DEFENSE, LAVA IS IMMEDIATELY MORE HAZARDOUS THAN WATER...


WAITWAITWAIT! I'M NOT READY!
REALLY DON'T CARE!
NOW I'M READY!
WHOA! DON'T--!
SQUOOSH
I...I THINK IT'S GETTING TOO HOT FOR ME...
YOU AND TAILS TAKE A BREATHER. READY, KNUX?
JUST TRY TO KEEP UP, SONIC!

NYARGH!
BRAK
ELOQUENT AS EVER, EGGMAN!
WHAT WAS--?!

M-METAL SONIC...?!
TAILS, ARE YOU...?
EEP!
BWA-HA-HA-HA! LOOK HOW THE TABLES HAVE TURNED!
SONIC! HELP!!

I'M SORRY, SONIC! I COULDN'T--
IT'LL BE OKAY. HOW BAD ARE YOU HURT?
I-I'LL BE OKAY... IN A MINUTE...
SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?!
WELL YOU CHILL OUT. EGGMAN WILL WANT TO GLOAT AND PROBABLY USE AMY AS A HOSTAGE. ONCE WE KNOW WHERE HE IS, WE GO IN, KICK HIS BUTT, AND SAVE AMY.
Whew!
ACTUALLY...
...I THINK WE CAN CUT STRAIGHT TO THE KICK-BUTT-AND-SAVE-AMY PART!
SOON...
THERE AREN'T ANY ISLANDS IN THE DIRECTION METAL SONIC AND EGGMAN WERE HEADING. THE EGG MOBILE AND METAL SONIC'S FLIGHT CAPABILITIES ARE BOTH SHORT-RANGE, SO...
...THEY MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF BASE IN THIS REGION!
DUDE! WHEN DID YOU GET THIS SMART?
AW, C'MON...


A SHORT FLIGHT LATER...
THERE! THAT MUST BE EGGMAN'S NEWEST FLYING BASE!
Eh...NOT AS SLEEK AS THE WING FORTRESS, BUT BIGGER THAN THE FLYING BATTERY. I'LL GIVE IT A...SIX-OUT-OF-TEN.
Pssht! IT'S NO DEATH EGG, THAT'S FOR SURE.
LET'S GO CLEAR THE WAY!
BET I CAN SMASH MORE THAN YOU!
YOU'RE ON!
Uh... GUYS? LOTS OF BADNIKS INCOMING!
POF
POF
POF
POF
POF

SONIC
SONIC

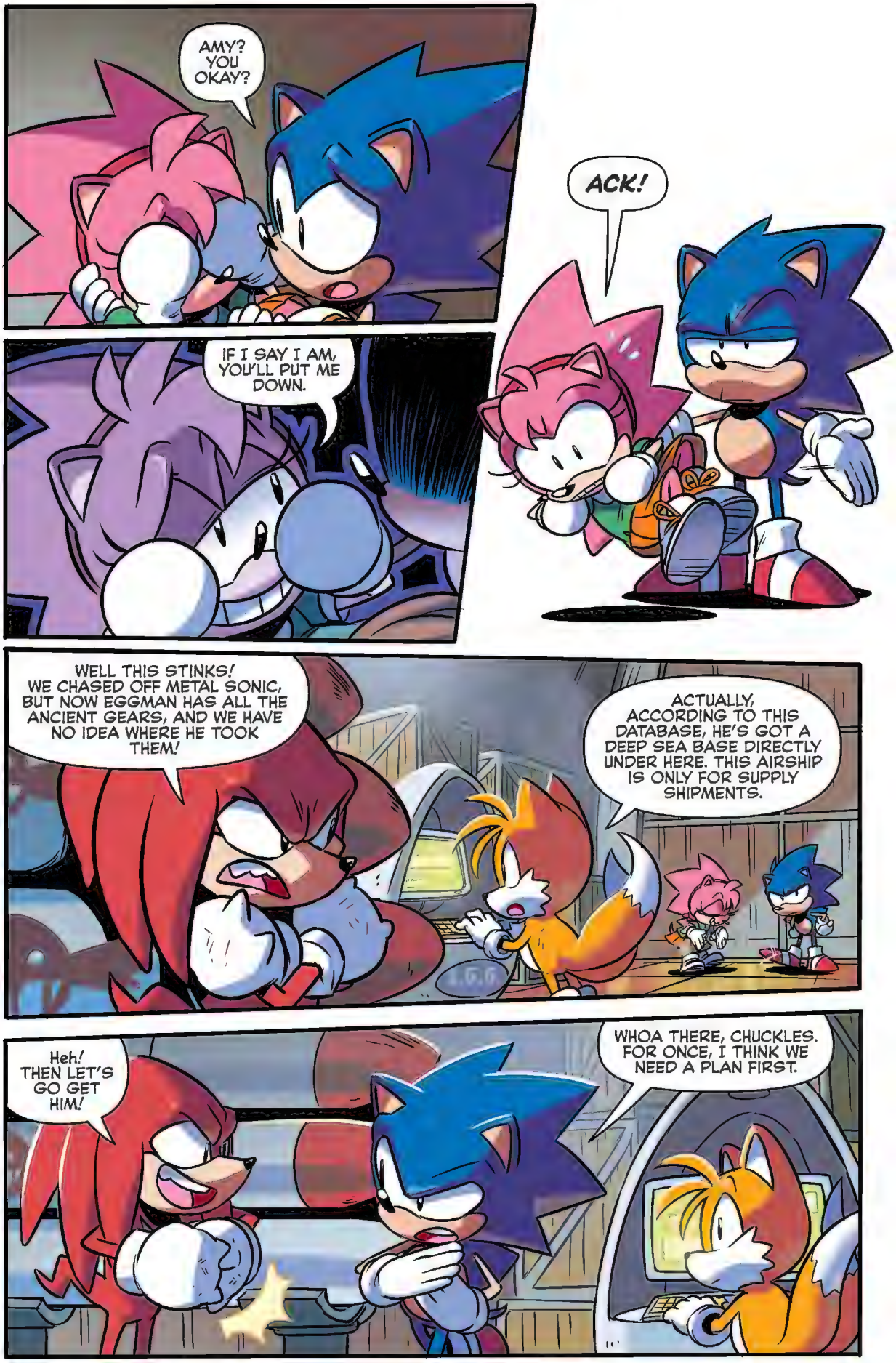
E.G.G.
SURPRISE, EGGMAN! NOW LET AMY GO-- PRONTO!
Hmph. AND I HAD A NICE, THREATENING LIST OF DEMANDS DRAFTED...
SONIC! HELP! MY HAMMER CAN'T BREAK THIS!
BUT IT ALL COMES OUT THE SAME IN THE END. GIVE ME THE LAST ANCIENT GEAR, AND I PROMISE *I'LL* LET AMY GO!
"LAST"? I THOUGHT THERE WERE SEVEN...
SONIC! METAL SONIC ONLY TOOK FIVE ANCIENT GEARS FROM ME!
I KNOW. WE GET AMY *AND* PLAY EGGMAN FOR A CHUMP!
FINE, DOC. YOU WIN. IT'S A DEAL!

HERE YOU GO, GRUESOME.
HOW CHIVALROUS OF YOU, SONIC! NOW, AS PROMISED, I--DR. EGGMAN-- HEREBY RELEASE AMY ROSE.
SONIC! LOOK OUT!
YOUR OTHER JAILOR, THOUGH, HAS SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS! HAHAHA!
VRRRRRRRRMMMMMM
HE'S GOT THE SEVENTH ANCIENT GEAR. GOTTA ADMIT-- SMOOTH MOVE, DOC.

ALRIGHT, LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE--!
--GOT?

BRAK
VREEE
VREEE
VREEE
BRAK
SCREEEE
MADE YOU LOOK.
BRAK

WHOOSH
AAIIIEEE!!
HEY! NICE OF YOU TO DROP IN!


AMY? YOU OKAY?
ACK!
IF I SAY I AM, YOU'LL PUT ME DOWN.
WELL THIS STINKS! WE CHASED OFF METAL SONIC, BUT NOW EGGMAN HAS ALL THE ANCIENT GEARS, AND WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HE TOOK THEM!
ACTUALLY, ACCORDING TO THIS DATABASE, HE'S GOT A DEEP SEA BASE DIRECTLY UNDER HERE. THIS AIRSHIP IS ONLY FOR SUPPLY SHIPMENTS.
Heh! THEN LET'S GO GET HIM!
WHOA THERE, CHUCKLES. FOR ONCE, I THINK WE NEED A PLAN FIRST.

YOU DO? SINCE WHEN?!
LOOK, METAL SONIC ONLY HAD ONE OF THOSE THINGS AND WE ONLY BEAT HIM BECAUSE YOU GUYS AMBUSHED HIM. IF EGGMAN'S GOT ALL SEVEN ANCIENT GEARS TO POWER IT, THEN WE'RE GOING TO BE OLD AND GREY BEFORE WE PUT A DENT IN HIS MEGA-WHATEVER.
WHAT IF WE CAN FIND THE CHAOS EMERALDS? I BET SUPER SONIC COULD HANDLE ANYTHING!
YEAH! AND THEY DO HAVE A HABIT OF SHOWING UP WHEN WE NEED THEM...
LET'S GET BACK TO THE EASTWATCH ISLANDS AND FIND US SOME CHAOS EMERALDS!
DR. EGGMAN MAY HAVE ALL THE ANCIENT GEARS, BUT HE'S NOT WON YET! COME BACK FOR THE FINAL CHAPTER IN SONIC MEGA DRIVE: OVERDRIVE! YOU CAN GET EVEN MORE SONIC ACTION WITH SONIC THE HEDGEHOG, SONIC UNIVERSE, SONIC SUPER DIGEST AND THE GRAPHIC NOVEL LIBRARY!

Letter from the EDITOR

Editorial commentary which knows that if you try, you can do anything!

CREATIVE TEAM GOT THROUGH ACT TWO!

Welcome, Sonic fans! How'd you like that for a follow-up? Ian, Tyson, Matt and Jack gave it their all to take us to the *next level* for this story and I truly believe they hit a grand slam! Beautiful work, guys!

From the beginning, I knew *Mega Drive* was going to be something special. It's so rewarding to see how many fans, new and old, enjoyed the first issue and thanks to that great response, we were able to continue this journey with even more action, adventure and, most importantly, fun!

From the bottom of my heart and on behalf of the staff here at Archie, thank you for joining us on this journey. We take chances every day and there's no telling how things will end up. But if the initial step is never taken, you'll never know what could have been. I'm so glad that we took this chance and that this team was given the opportunity once more to show you all what they can do!

Finally, a major shout out to our friends at SEGA who have been super supportive of the *Mega Drive* project. It's a pleasure to work with you all and I can't wait to do even more!

With that, I hope everyone enjoyed *The Next Level*! Onward to victory!

– Vincent "Vin" Lovallo
Editor

ABOVE AND BELOW: Sonic and Metal face off in these cover thumbnail sketches by *Sonic: Mega Drive -The Next Level* artist Tyson Hesse! Can you identify which of these covers is drawn in reference to the SEGA CD game *Sonic CD*?

OFF PANEL

PROUDLY PRESENTS:

SECRET -ORIGINS- METAL SONIC

SCRIPT: RON CACACE ART: VINCENT LOVALLO

WHOA!
DR. EGGMAN'S TOP SECRET LAB
ABSOLUTELY NO HEDGEHOGS ALLOWED
"NO HEDGEHOGS ALLOWED," HUH?
SCREEEEEECH!!
SOUNDS LIKE AN INVITATION TO ME!
BOOM
WHAT ARE THOSE?!
WHAT THE... A LEATHER JACKET?
A STEEL DONUT?
STRANGE, ISN'T IT? ONLY ONE THING TO DO!
KA-BLAMMO!
WELL, MY WORK HERE IS DONE.
SMELL YA LATER, EGGMAN!
NO WAY, I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
MY MOST ORIGINAL CREATIONS! I'LL GET YOU YET, SONIC!
SOON
YOU ACTUALLY DID ME A FAVOR, SONIC!
I'LL NEVER HAVE TO REBUILD THIS ONE!

SONIC™
-MEGA DRIVE-
OVERDRIVE
PENDING LICENSOR APPROVAL
TO BE CONCLUDED...

...SPRING 2017